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ABSTRACT

Focusing on public speaking as a major instructional tool for teachers, this paper contains suggestions for more effective lecturing. In the introduction, classroom communication is analyzed according to four moves: structuring, soliciting, responding, and reacting. The paper then discusses four problems in studying learning from meaningful verbal discourse and recommends four principles of communication information exchange: create a need to know in students; make the information relevant; present information that is well organized, repeated, and dramatic; and reduce information overload. The paper also deals with problems of lecturing, solutions to these problems and steps in preparing a lecture. Sequential activities for training teachers to lecture effectively and a lecture evaluation form for students to fill out are included. The appendix includes a diagram about narrowing a lecture topic and tables of clarification devices and organizational patterns for the body of the lecture. (EL)

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**Teachers as Public Speakers:
Training Teachers to Lecture**

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Teachers as Public Speakers: Training Teachers to Lecture

Introduction/Rationale

Public speaking - particularly in the form of lecturing - is a major instructional tool. Arno Bellack and his colleagues devised a system to analyze classroom communication according to four moves:

1. **Structuring.** Structuring moves serve the pedagogical functional of setting the context for subsequent behavior by either by launching or halting ~~the~~ guiding interaction between students and teachers. For example, teachers frequently launch a class period with a structuring move in which they focus attention on the topic or problem to be discussed during that session.
2. **Soliciting.** Moves in this category are designed to elicit a verbal response, to encourage persons addressed to attend to something, or to elicit a physical response. All questions are solicitations, as are commands, imperatives, and requests.
3. **Responding.** These moves bear a reciprocal relationship to soliciting moves and occur only in relation to them. Their pedagogical function is to fulfill the expectation of soliciting moves; thus, students' answers to teachers' questions are classified as responding moves.
4. **Reacting.** These moves are occasioned by a structuring, soliciting, responding, or prior reacting move but are not directly elicited by them. Pedagogically, these moves serve to modify (by clarifying, synthesizing, or explaining) and/or to rate (positively or negatively) what has been said previously. Reacting moves differ from responding moves: while a responding move is always directly elicited by a solicitation, preceding moves serve only as the occasion for reactions. Rating by a teacher of a student's response, for example, is designated as a reacting move.

Bellack and his coworkers described the sequence of these communication moves in the classroom by describing the teaching cycles present. Of twenty-one possible cycles, six accounted for approximately 80 percent of the total:

SOL	RES	REA			26%
SOL	RES				23.3%
SOL					9.7%
SOL	RES	REA	REA		9%
SOL	REA	REA	REA	REA	7%
STR	SOL	RES	REA		5%

SOL = soliciting; RES = responding; REA = reacting;
STR = structuring

Eighty-five percent of all teaching cycles were initiated by the teacher.

Hoetker and Ahlbrand,² in a historical review of teaching, suggest that there is a tremendous amount of regularity to the interaction patterns described by Bellack and his associates. Hoetker and Ahlbrand provide evidence indicating that these patterns have existed in American schools since 1912.

INFORMATION ACQUISITION AND PROCESSING

Although the verbal learning process is obviously central to an understanding of classroom learning, psychologists have only recently begun to examine how students learn via verbal discourse. John Carroll³ outlines four distinct problems in studying learning from meaningful verbal discourse:

1. The problem of how the individual learns her language and how this learning makes it possible to learn from meaningful verbal discourse.
2. The problem of how an individual understands sentences upon immediate presentation.
3. The problem of how sentence comprehensions are retained.
4. The problem of the relation between learning through language and learning by other means.

Until we have answers or solutions to these problems, Carroll suggests learning through verbal discourse will not be as effective as it could otherwise be.

Despite the lack of complete solutions to these problems, we still know certain things about how students learn from being told and what we as teachers can do to make that learning more effective. Students acquire and process information symbolically through language, their perceptions of you and the classroom situation, and their perceptions and communication with self. Several variables affect this symbolic interaction process in the classroom -- sensory limitations, perception differences, emotional states, needs, values and beliefs.

In an attempt to make "learning from being told" easier for our students, the following principles of communication information exchange are recommended:

1. Create a "need to know" in your students. If you tell your students on the first day of class what will be expected -- how many papers, texts, etc. -- they'll listen to the answer. They feel a "need to know." Similarly, your students must have the same feeling if they are to listen to your lecture.
2. Make your information relevant. This may involve your relating the new information to already familiar information. If you speak to your class about persuasion theory, the information may not relate to their experience. If, on the other hand, you relate the information about persuasion theory to advertising and explain how students are affected by persuasive techniques in advertising, they will be more interested in the information.
3. Information is more likely to be understood if it is well organized, repeated, and has emotional impact. When presenting information, organization is very important. If you are describing a process, for example, you must begin "at the beginning" and follow through each step until you reach the end of the process. If you "skip around," your students will become confused and information will be lost.

Repetition is also important in retention of information. You should determine the four or five most important ideas in your lecture and utilize repetitions to "drive home" your point.

Think about this past week. What event "stands out" in your memory? No doubt it was an event filled with emotional impact. Information that contains such impact is more memorable than straight facts. In your lecturing, make use of memorable examples, illustrations, and anecdotes to help insure your students' retention of your key ideas.

4. Retention and understanding are lessened if you "overload" students with too much information. Most students can handle five to nine "bits" of information comfortably. Thus, only a few main points should be covered in a single lecture. Reduce information overload by chunking similar information together, previewing the information you'll present, using internal summaries, and narrowing your topic.

LECTURING AS PUBLIC SPEAKING

Problems

The robins sang and sang and sang,
but the teacher you went right on.
The last bell sounded the end of the day,
but teacher you went right on.
The geranium on the window sill just died,
but teacher you went right on.⁴

Too often, the above poem describes our students' reactions to our lecturing. However, this doesn't have to be the case. When you use the lecture method, devices such as rhetorical questions, handouts to be completed as the lecture progresses, previewing the lesson, and continually referring to the reading assignment are all means of enhancing student involvement in the lecture. The lecture is a communicative event and the "give and take" of communicative messages is a continuous process.

Lecturing is, essentially, informative speaking. The major purpose of informative speaking is to secure clear understanding of the concepts you present. Several communication barriers can inhibit the creation of clear understanding. Teachers need to be aware of the following problem areas:

1. There is too much or not enough information presented.
2. Information is presented too factually or too inferentially
3. Information is too concrete or too abstract.
4. Information is too general or too specific.
5. Communication is feedback-poor or feedback-rich.
6. Information is presented too rapidly or too slowly.
7. Information is presented too soon or too late.

8. Information is presented with too much or too little intensity.

Solutions

In order to help teachers avoid these errors, they need to understand when lecturing is the appropriate method, the advantages and disadvantages to the lecture method, how to construct a lecture, and structured practice. I have discussed the first two elsewhere.⁵ Thus, in the remainder of this paper, I will focus on the steps in lecture preparation, and activities designed to aid teacher's in improving their lecturing skills.

Preparing a Lecture

The steps in lecture preparation, as in the construction of any speech, are five: (1) choose a topic, (2) narrow the topic, (3) gather supporting material, (4) organize the lecture, and (5) deliver the lecture. We'll discuss each of these in detail.

The first step in lecture preparation, is to choose a topic. What information do you want your students to know? This step is fairly complex. Several factors must be considered. First, teachers need to consider themselves. What do they know about the topic? Can they rely exclusively on their own knowledge or will they need to utilize the thoughts and/or research of others?

Students must also be considered--their age and educational level are particularly important. Is the topic of real relevance to them? What knowledge do they already possess concerning the topic? What attitudes, past experiences, and unique characteristics do they have that would influence how the topic would best be approached?

The classroom environment is another important factor. Are the physical environment and the psychological environment of the classroom conducive to covering the topic? Is there enough time? Will visual aids be necessary to create attention to the clarity of the topic?

The next step in lecture preparation is to narrow your topic. You need to narrow your lecture topic until you have a simple sentence that states clearly and concisely what you wish to accomplish with your students (thesis statement). This funneling process is graphically illustrated in Figure 1 (See Appendix).

The third step in lecture preparation is gathering supporting materials that will make the ideas you're presenting "come alive." Each teacher needs to consider her/himself, students, and the classroom environment when choosing supporting materials. In addition the basic purpose of the lecture--to create clear understanding- needs to be kept in the forefront. When choosing supporting materials, consider whether they help clarify the ideas and enhance student attention. Clarification devices are numerous. Table 1 presents a brief explanation of the most common types of verbal supporting material used for clarification. (See Appendix).

In addition to these verbal supporting materials, nonverbal supporting materials such as a graph, photographs, or objects, can clarify ideas and help maintain student attention.

Other means to maintaining student attention include:

1. Use supporting materials which is recent and relevant to students in terms of time and space.
2. Insert questions into the lecture to serve the following purposes:
 - a. Emphasis. Call special attention to important points by asking a question.
 - b. Practice. A response to a question enables the student to practice her newly acquired knowledge. The old adage, practice makes perfect, seems to be borne out in educational research.
 - c. Self-Awareness. Students can be made aware that they do not understand the material. Often students are robotlike in a lecture--sitting quietly and taking notes. They often do not realize they didn't comprehend the material until they study it later. Questions can stimulate their thinking while they're in the lecture, when it's still possible to get clarification from the instructor.

- d. Diversion. Much like a coffee break at work, questions inserted into a lecture can represent a form of stimulus variation. Stimulus variation can be an aid to attention and, thus, to learning.
 - e. Review. Questions scattered throughout the lecture could require students to review previous material presented in the lecture in order to answer the question. If questions are structured so that such a review is necessary, students are exposed to the lecture material more than just once. This increased exposure should enhance learning.
3. The teacher's enthusiasm and activity during the lecture can generate interest in students. Rosenshire⁶ reviewed five correlational studies in which ratings of enthusiasm by the instructor were correlated with student achievement. Significant correlations ranged from .37 to .56. Other researchers⁷ have found similar results -- that students learn more from lectures delivered dynamically and enthusiastically.
4. Attention is maintained by materials which combine the familiar and the novel, are unusual, create suspense and/or conflict, and are humorous.

Although research on the relationship of lecture organization to student learning is contradictory, most teachers agree that an organized lecture is better than an unorganized lecture. As Buxton tells us, "...the goal of lecturing is, after all communication, and it is likely to be more effective if there is an evident order or sequence."⁸

A lecture has a general organization of introduction, body, and conclusion. The introduction of your lecture should accomplish the following three purposes:

1. Establish student-teacher rapport. One of the most important variables in the teaching-learning process is the relationship between a teacher and her students. Students feel better about themselves and the learning situation when they feel their relationship with their instructor is a positive one. Students will be more willing to listen if you establish rapport in your introduction.
2. Gain student attention. If students are not attending to what's being said, they cannot learn it. Thus, the introduction must "grab" them and make them want to listen to the rest of the lecture.
3. "Set the scene." The introduction should preview what will be covered in your lecture.

The conclusion to the lecture should accomplish two purposes:

1. Post-organize. Too often we confuse coverage of content with learning. Student exposure to the subject and student learning of the subject are not synonymous. Students need to be reminded of what it was they were to learn from the lecture. This is easily done by summarizing your main points.
2. Provide a sense of closure. Avoid false endings. It is frustrating to students to feel that you're finished and then have you add "just one more point."

The main points of the body of a lecture can be arranged according to several patterns. The most often used organizational patterns are presented in Table 2. Examples of each are also provided. (See Appendix).

The final step in lecture preparation is presenting the lecture. Effective presentation takes careful planning and practice. Teachers need to be aware of the following principles:

1. Think-really think-about what you're saying. Speak ideas rather than simply reciting words.
2. Communicate. Think of your lecture as a dialogue, not a Soliloquy. Talk with your students, not at them. This involves being direct and conversational and looking at your students. Remember that they are not empty chairs, but are alive. Don't just look at them--really see them and relate to them.
3. Support and reinforce your ideas with your body and your voice. Vocal aspects of which you should be aware are pitch, intensity, rate and quality. Visual aspects such as posture, gestures, and facial expressions are also important.
4. Adapt to your students. Watch for cues indicating that you need to change some aspect of your delivery--pace, volume, pitch, gestures, etc.
5. Be enthusiastic.

ACTIVITIES

In training teachers to lecture effectively, it is important to sequence the activities used. In this section, activities which I use, and have found effective in teacher training are outlined.

Activity 1: The Cinquain

As an introduction to the process of lecturing, have teachers write a 5 line poem - the cinquain - following the format below:

- | | |
|--------|--|
| Line 1 | A subject |
| Line 2 | 2 words describing the subject |
| Line 3 | 3 words describing the subject, all
ending in the same suffix |
| Line 4 | 4-word sentence describing your relationship
with or feelings about the subject |
| Line 5 | Repeat line 1 |

Example:	Spinning wheel Charming machine Creating, expressing, exhausting You make my yarn Spinning Wheel
----------	--

Have teachers share their cinquains. Use the poems to discuss

1. Three parts of lecture
2. How parts are integrated and related.
3. Narrowing the topic
4. Importance of good organization
5. Importance of word choice for clarity
6. Importance of supporting materials

Activity 2

It's important for teachers to get to know their students. The examples below suggest the types of questions you might ask your students on a questionnaire. The questions below are only suggestions. Each teacher must adapt the questions for their teaching level. Students should be told that information is confidential and they may choose not to answer any questions they would rather not.

1. How old are you?
2. What is your father's occupation? Your mother's?
3. How many children are in your family?
4. Name a hobby or activity you enjoy.
5. What are your favorite academic subjects? Your least favorite?
6. Who are your best friends?
7. List three adjectives that describe you.
8. If you had one wish, what would it be?
9. What books, magazines, and newspapers do you read?
10. Do you have a job? If so, how many hours a week do you work? Describe your job.
11. In what extracurricular activities are you involved?
12. What is your major goal for this year?

This activity helps teachers begin to know how to make supporting materials relevant and stimulating to their students.

Activity 3

Analyze a lecture you recently presented or attended. Was the lecture method appropriate? Why or why not?

Systematic observation of other teachers can help us improve our own teaching. Discussion of teacher's findings from this activity is a good way to explain when the lecture method is appropriate and why.

Activity 4

This activity is the first in a series. Choose a topic for lecture. Analyze yourself, the student group to whom you will present the lecture, and the classroom environment in which the lecture will be given.

Activity 5

Using the topic you chose in Activity 4 narrow the topic to a thesis statement. You should plan for a fifteen-minute microteaching session. Thus, your thesis statement must be narrow enough so that you can adequately cover it in fifteen minutes.

Activity 6

Examine your thesis statement from Activity 5.
What supporting materials will you use to develop this thesis statement?
Describe them.
Clarification devices:
Attention devices:
Visual aids:

Activity 7

Organize your lecture choosing any of the organizational patterns discussed then outline your lecture. Your outline should follow the form below.
Thesis statement:
Organizational pattern chosen for the body of the lecture:

Why did you choose this pattern?

Form your outline should follow:

I. Introduction

(Write this out completely)

II. Body

A. Main Point #1

1. Subpoint #1

a.

b.

1.

2.

Supporting Material

2. Subpoint #2

a.

1.

2.

b.

Supporting Material

III. Conclusion

(Write this out completely)

Activity 8

Present your lecture either in a microteaching situation or in your own classroom. Have your "students" evaluate you. A suggested evaluation form is included here. Also, analyze yourself using the following form:

Self-Evaluation Form

My lecturing strengths:

My lecturing weaknesses:

If I were to present this lecture again, I would:

Lecture Evaluation Form for Students

Lecturer's Name _____ Course _____

Lecturer topic _____ Date _____

Please mark an "X" on the point on the scale that best represents your evaluation of the lecture.

My overall reaction to this lecture was:

unfavorable _____ neutral _____ favorable _____

Please rate the specific aspects of the lecture:

The degree of organization:

poor _____ adequate _____ fair _____ good _____ excellent _____

The clarity of the presentation:

poor _____ adequate _____ fair _____ good _____ excellent _____

The enthusiasm of the instructor:

poor _____ adequate _____ fair _____ good _____ excellent _____

The effectiveness of the examples given:

poor _____ adequate _____ fair _____ good _____ excellent _____

The interest the lecture had for me:

poor _____ adequate _____ fair _____ good _____ excellent _____

What points in the lecture were UNCLEAR for you?

What is one thing you learned from this lecture?

What aspects of the lecturer's behavior or style helped or hindered the lecture?

HELPED:

HINDERED:

Suggestions for Improving the Lecture:

CONCLUSION

Lecturing has been described as "the process whereby the notes of the professor become the notes of the student without going through the minds of either." If teachers go through the steps of lecture preparation discussed here—choose a topic, narrow the topic, gather supporting materials, organize the lecture, and deliver the lecture—teachers should be able to make their lecture a communicative transaction with their students. Not only will the lecturer's notes go through her/his mind, but through the students' minds as well!

NOTES

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APPENDIX

Please note: All materials are taken from Cooper, Pamela.
Speech Communication for the Classroom Teacher.
Scottsdale, AR: Gorsuch-Scarisbrick Press, 1984.

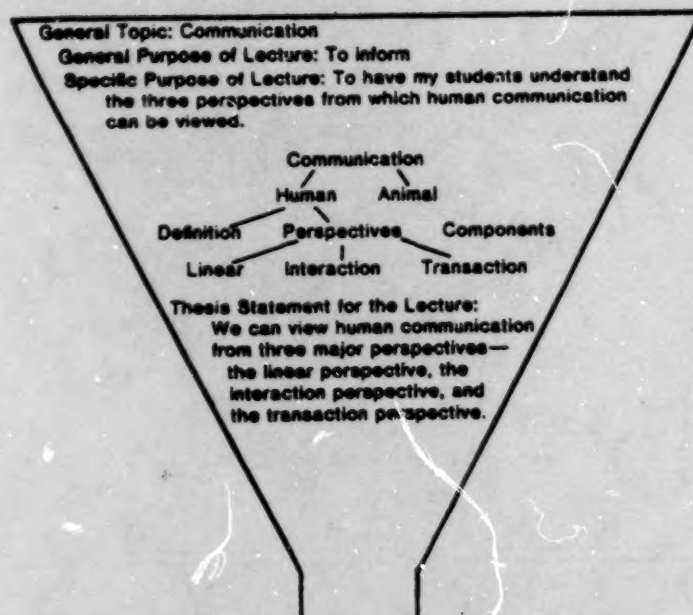


Figure 1 The funneling process: Narrowing a lecture topic.

Table 1 Supporting materials: clarification devices.

Clarification Device	Function/Example
Example	Expository or descriptive passage used to make ideas, process, proposal, etc. clear
a. Illustration	Detailed narrative example
1. Hypothetical	Tells what <i>could</i> have happened An important concept in communication is self-fulfilling prophecies. If we define a situation as real, it becomes real in its consequences. Suppose you are a student in a mathematics class. You have taken other mathematics courses and have not done well. You define yourself as a poor student in this particular class. As a result of that definition, you rarely participate in class, you appear nervous, you cut class several times during the semester, and therefore miss content. As a result, you flunk the exam. The instructor calls you into her office and explains that you will have to do better if you want to pass the mathematics course. Your prophecy—that you're a poor student in math—has been fulfilled.
2. Factual	Tells what <i>did</i> happen Rosenthal's work has shown that an expectation a teacher has for a child can lead to self-fulfilling prophecy in that child. Children were randomly labeled as "bloomers." Teachers were told which students were "bloomers" and which students were not. Eight months later, children who had been labeled "bloomers" did indeed bloom. They received higher test scores than students who were not designated as "bloomers." Teachers expectations that students would do well led to self-fulfilling prophecies in the "bloomers."
b. Instance	An undetailed example—presents numerous examples of the same phenomenon. An important axiom of communication is that meanings are in people, not in words. How cold is cold? To some people, cold is 20 degrees above zero; to others it is 20 degrees below zero. How tall is tall? When you think of a large university, how many students do you envision? One writer tells us that the simple words, "I love you," can mean anything from, "I desire you sexually," to "I hate you." Think of such words as <i>democracy</i>, <i>cheap</i>, <i>dog</i>, and <i>happy</i>. Write down a brief definition of each. Now compare your "meaning" with the one by the person sitting next to you. How similar are they?
Statistics	Using quantification in order to make a complex situation clear, to substantiate a claim, or make an abstract idea concrete.

Table 1 continued

	Communication apprehension is a common problem. Research indicates that 1 out of every 5 students is highly apprehensive about communication, and another 20 percent are moderately apprehensive about communicating.
Testimony	Using the opinions or conclusions of others; can act as proof or add impressiveness to an idea. Because meanings are in people, not in words, we should strive to make our words as explicit as possible. As Mark Twain so aptly indicated, "The difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightning and the lightning bug."
Definition	Presenting a meaning for a word—particularly important when the word is abstract or technical in nature. Interpersonal communication is the process of establishing, maintaining, and terminating relationships.
Contrast	Pointing out the differences between two phenomenon, one of which is familiar to the students. In contrast to the public speaking situation in which communication is very structured, interpersonal communication is a relatively unstructured communication context. In the public context, communication roles are very formalized. This is not true in the interpersonal realm. No one is designated as "speaker" and "receiver." Rather, both people are expected to assume those roles.
Comparison	Points out the similarities between something that is familiar to students and something that is not. Communication, like life, is a process. It is ever-changing. Just as we cannot repeat part of our lives, neither can we repeat a communication event. Time has passed and so even if we say the same words, they are not really the "same." Likewise, communication, like life, is irreversible.
Restatement/ Repetition	Restatement is the reiteration of an idea in different words; repetition, in the same words. Both restatement and repetition are used to "drive home" an idea. Let me remind you. We communicate—not by what we are, but by what listeners understand. We communicate—not by what we intend to say, but by what listeners see, hear, and are willing to accept. We communicate—not by what we say, but by what listeners hear.

Table 2 Organizational patterns for the body of the lecture.

Type	Definition	Example
Chronological	A time sequence	In preparing a lecture, five sequential steps must be followed: choose a topic, narrow the topic, gather supporting materials, organize the lecture, practice the lecture.
Spatial	Space relationships—moving systematically from east-to-west, front-to-back, center-to-outside, etc.	Proxemic behavior differs across cultures. A "comfortable" distance between people as they converse differs. We'll examine this phenomena in the U.S. and Latin America. We'll then "fly across the ocean" and examine conversational distances of Europeans and Southern Europeans. Finally, we'll examine the proxemic behavior of Asians and Arabs.
Causal	Enumerating causes and moving to effects or enumerating effects and moving to causes.	We all structure our own reality since we all perceive differently. Our perceptions differ because of differing environments, differing stimuli, differing sensory receptors, and differing internal states.
Problem-Solution	Describe problem and present a solution	Researchers tell us that one of the major problems for people in the 1980s is the developing and maintaining of warm, personal relationships. The only way for us to solve this problem is to learn how to communicate effectively.
Topical	The topic provides its own organizational structure.	Human communication can be viewed from three perspectives—linear, interaction, transaction.